

## HOME READING.

## Thanksgiving Hymn of Peace.

On thy high and sovereign throne,  
I stand in awe;—  
My heart is bound,  
By the curse that never shall end,  
By thy holy name.  
In thy highest thought,  
The chattering came,  
My device has mercy brought.  
On thy throne in love supreme,  
With thy presence still,  
I may see the morning beam  
Of thy compassion to thy will.  
The spirit of thy law  
Doth abide in all our spirits reign,  
To draw the truth may draw  
Our erring hearts to thee again.  
How shall we give to thee the praise,  
To be kind and dear, with heart and tongue,  
And to endless days  
Praise and glory sing.

—Wm. Olden Bourne.

[For the Bloomfield Citizen.]

## The Voyage of Life.

We are floating, we are floating,  
floating down the stream of Life,  
Youthful, frolicsome and happy,  
Free from care and pain and strife,  
Bright and sparkling is the water,  
Kissed by rays of shining sun;  
Smiling are the fragrant flowers,  
Takes voyage has just begun.  
  
We are gliding, we are gliding,  
Gliding down the deep, blue stream;  
Glad the sun and nature smiling,  
But the banks of life seem  
Dark and sparkling still the water,  
As the day leaves for the now,  
Sings we sing and dance to the glee,  
Joy and thoughtless are we now.  
  
We are sailing, we are sailing,  
Sailing down the river broad;  
Depth increasing, and receding,  
Stays and shoals are seen about us,  
Rocks and whirlpools soon appear;  
Some are thoughtful, some are anxious,  
Others scoff and laugh at fear.  
  
We are leaping, flying, leaping,  
Leaping down this dangerous fare;  
Winds are howling, thunder crashing,  
Lightning flashing everywhere;  
Seething, boiling, hissing, surging,  
See the billows, how they roll!  
Sun and flag and pennon flying,  
"Peace!" they whisper to the soul.  
  
We are dashing, flying, rushing,  
O'er the mountain wave,  
Now to leeward, now to windward—  
Our hearts are true and brave,  
Feeling shadows quickly gather,  
Dusk and dreary is the night;  
But before us lies the harbor,  
Brightly shines the beacon light.  
  
We are floating, gliding, sailing,  
Safely o'er the waters blue,  
Storms have ceased, and far behind us  
Left our perils—still in view.  
Boat and skiff is our Pilot  
In our voyage to the sea,  
Safe to the goal he'll bring us,  
On the shore of eternity.

—Frank C. Bliss.

Paul, Minn., February, 1884.

## My Extraordinary Friend.

**CHAPTER I.**  
I was only an assistant master in a private school in the south of England, but my position was very comfortable one. My salary was small, but so were my expenses. I had sufficient leisure time. The boys were as a body of a very good class, and best, perhaps, of all, I agreed thoroughly with the head master, who treated me rather as a companion and an equal than in the manner usually associated with the profession of usher. I believe I was popular with the boys because I entered with zest into their sports and pursuits; and having been educated at a large public school myself, I understood them, and possessed that tact in treatment and management which so few of the many men who groan at the slavery of "cub taming" seem to possess. Naturally I did not intend to devote the remainder of my life to "cub taming" but I was a stern believer in the old axiom that "All things come to him who waits," probably because I had a very tangible something to wait for in the shape of a little fortune composed of old Indian relatives, who, however speaking, could not possibly live very many years longer.

I was popular among the boys, yet I think they only friend I had among them was a tall Russian named Ivan Dolomski. I believe I took a fancy to him simply because he was tall. He was a very extraordinary, indeed, a very intellectual giant with the body of a boy of sixteen. Why he was a simple by his schoolfellows. I could never satisfactorily make out unless it was because his ways were mysterious, because he took no part in the active healthful sports of the others; did not know the difference between "square" and "cover point," or between a drop kick and a punt; and perhaps because he was reputed to be "awfully" clever—the word "awfully" in his case being taken in its literal, and not its colloquial sense.

The boys who had been able to get a peek into the desk, which he kept, as a rule, tightly locked up, declared that it was a regular study room inside. While his mates were reading of skylarking during the hours of indoor leisure, he would be absorbed in the gloom of this desk, hammering, sawing, nailing; now and then creating a terrible smell, and more than once causing a small explosion. He spent whole pocket-money—and he had plenty—on old bits of iron, tubes, models of engines, mysterious substances wrapped in paper. In fact, he was as unlike the average English schoolboy of his own age as could be imagined, and was regarded much in the same way as a wise man or necromancer of the middle ages was regarded by the ignorant populace, saving in one respect—no one dared to interfere with him. Quiet and fearless when left alone, forbearing, even when annoyed and taunted, if he was roused to a mere ordinary bold move on the part of his schoolfellows, such as a grab at his desk, his black eyes would flash, his brow would contract into an almost dragon's mouth, and no matter what weapon he could reach or who was present, he would use it with the frenzy of a madman.

Hence he was an object of awe and suspicion, as well as of ridicule, to the school. But to me he was different, to the school. There was much in common between us for I had no taste for melees; but I used to speak to him, and to take an interest in his pursuits. I used to take his part against the young "bulldogs" who were everlastingly yapping and snapping about him; and he would refer to me upon scientific questions in a manner which only served to bring out the astonishing ignorance of one who was supposed to be his teacher, but which bound him closely to me. In the school he was silent, silent, morose. At my desk, at my side in the playground, in my private room, he was bright, enthusiastic, and cheerful.

But there was another bond of unity between us. Ivan evidently came of wealthy and patrician parents. Every other Saturday afternoon a magnificently appointed carriage drove up to the playground from the neighboring watering-place of Hythe, and the word was passed that "young Bear's" friends had come for him. In the carriage there were usually an elderly lady and a girl of eighteen. As I was invariably on playground duty during Saturday afternoons, I became in some sort acquainted with Madame Dolomski and her daughter Olga, especially as I had generally to be employed as an agent between them and Ivan; for if the latter happened to be engaged upon some interesting experiment or new problem, the most endearing off maternal messages could not drag him away; and even I, with all my influence, had sometimes to return to the carriage without him.

My conversation was chiefly with the elder lady; but my regards, I must say, were entirely for the younger. She was, as I have said, about eighteen, the possessor of one of those open, smiling faces which make us resent all that cynics and satirists have said against woman, a face set in an aureole of clustering curls of figure which some might say was too square and full developed to be within the category of feminine delicacy and grace, but which I rightly estimated to be the outcome of cold water and fresh air of faultless hands and feet; and perhaps, best of all, the sweetest and most musical of voices. I don't suppose she would have been looked at in a Belgravian drawing-room, but to me, a poor schoolmaster, shut up during nine months of the twelve within the school boundary walls, who seldom saw a fairer face than that of Betty Housemaid, she seemed an angel. And although I was a dreamy young enthusiast of four-and-twenty, I knew more than to believe that any but a kind, good heart could be enshrouched within so attractive a frame.

Once smitten, I began to regard these Saturday visits as epochs in my existence, and was always hovering about the gate at about the usual hour of the carriage's arrival, and I do not believe I had ever passed two moreretched ten minutes in my life than once when I happened to be at the other end of the ground stopping a fight, and the French master played my role to the occupants of the carriage; and another time when Madame arrived alone. I suppose Ivan must have told his mother and sister of his respect and affection for me, for not only were they invariably polite and gracious, but they asked me to dine with them at Hythe one evening, and from their surroundings I could see that they were very great people. I believe the French master could have eaten me when I returned that night.

Of course it was all very absurd, although there might have been something romantic in the love of an humble usher with a hundred a year for the daughter of a Russian colonel with a "Von" before his name; but there it was. I found Olga so amiable, so intelligent, so interested in all that I told her about English school-life and traditions and pastimes and eccentricities, that I am afraid when the carriage came, I did not pay one-half the attention to the good Madame that I paid her daughter.

My joy may be imagined when one Saturday the carriage came with Olga alone in it. I do not know what I said or how I looked during the half hour that I stood beside it, but I remember that I did not hurry to execute the usual errand of fetching Ivan until the expiration of that time. There was not a trace of courtesy about Olga's bearing toward me; but I impressed myself with the notion that she reciprocated my passion, and built for myself castles in the air which in extravagance surpassed the wildest dreams of romantics.

The more I saw of Ivan the less I understood him. When I watched him among his schoolfellows there was a set scowl on his face, and an ugly line on each side of his mouth, which proclaimed that his hand was against everyone's and everyone's hand against his. When he saw me, the dark, almost truculent face would light up, the bad lines would fade from his mouth, and a smile would break out, which made him look positively handsome. Yet strong as was my influence over him, I never could get him to assimilate himself to the surroundings of his life, and when I suggested cricket or football, he would answer: "Mr. Cornell; such sports are for barbarians, not for gizars."

**A. VON ROBELEFF, SECRETARY.**

"If I should deem this opportunity worthy of notice!" I almost scornfully repeated to myself. "If! The only 'if' in the matter is that I'm not tutor in Colonel Thingammy's family in less than a month, my name isn't Richard Cornell."

I had no ties; I longed to see the world, for I believed in another old axiom to the effect that "home-keeping youth have ever honey wit;" and of course I should come across a certain damsel with golden hair and kind blue eyes, and—In fact, I worked myself into such a state of ecstasy that I was utterly unfitted during the rest of the day for anything in the shape of teaching or keeping-order, and my young friends the boys had a "high old time" of it, both in class and out.

In a week's time I had arranged matters with my employer, who expressed genuine concern at the prospect of losing me. In a fortnight's time I had received a most flattering testimonial from the boys, and had been sent off to the station with three ringing cheers. In three weeks' time I was ready. In a month I was at my new home; and in six weeks' time I found that I had a great reason to congratulate myself on my good fortune.

Colonel Koltor lived in one of those huge stone palaces which line both sides of the Nevski Prospect; and I soon discovered that not only did his family occupy a high social position, but that in them were to be found all those refined and fascinating

men who make the society of men to see you there."

Quayle made a dash with his arm, arts and graces which he had given to St. Petersburg perhaps the most charming. "No, that won't do," he said abstractly. "Look here. Suppose you come to Europe. Moreover, I was treated as a bully."

Fully aware that my young protege had received far greater provocation than was upper servant. My hours of work were going to be a meeting of the heads of the police here to-morrow. Your precious

Colonel, your lord and master, Mr. Cornell, is going to preside. Madame and your pupils will be out; you won't be wanted.

Suppose, I say, you meet me at the Warsaw restaurant near the Nevski Monastery, close by the canal, you know, at midday to-morrow. Eh?

"But why at such an out-of-the-way place?" I asked.

"Because there is nowhere else," he replied.

"All right," I said. "To-morrow at twelve."

He nodded his head and disappeared in the darkness.

"Well," I said to myself, "he is more extraordinary than I imagined he could have been. He was before his age at school, but now at nineteen, he looks and speaks like a man of forty."

I turned into the house and to bed; but even the sweet vision of the girl I loved was driven out by this strange, mysterious, old young man. When I recalled his former peculiarities—his mechanical genius, the strange relics found in his schoolboy desk, I put two and two together—his general hatred to the Government, his particular hatred to my patron as Chief of Police, his acquaintance with the arrangements and movements of the house; his anxiety to get me away on the morrow. The result of consideration was summed up in two words—Nihilists, dynamite.

I started from my bed, dressed myself, and knocked at the Colonel's door. He appeared armed with a revolver, but laughed heartily when he saw me. "Why, Mr. Cornell," he said in French. "what is it?"

"Colonel," I said, "there is to be a meeting of police officers here to-morrow, is there not?"

The Colonel looked astonished. "Why, he exclaimed, "how did you know that? Not a soul out of the police bureau knows it."

"Anyhow, I know it," I said. "Please be warned. Hold the meeting elsewhere."

"Ha!" said the Colonel, looking at me in a strange manner. "Many thanks. I will take care. Good night."

## CHAPTER III.

The next day I was at the appointed place at the appointed time. Ivan was a few minutes later.

"Strange place," he said; "but we are safe here; and that's more than can be said of many houses in this city."

When I surveyed his face in full daylight, I was struck by the change which less than three short years had worked on it. He had left me a boy, a sullen, morose, pensive boy, but still a boy; now he was a haggard, careworn man; three years had written the marks of twenty on every line of his face; he had jumped from sixteen to forty.

When the man handed us the bill of fare, Ivan looked at him searchingly. "You are a new servant," he said. "Where is Alexis?"

"Alexis died last week," replied the man; "I replace him."

Then we talked of old times, and old places, and old acquaintances; and of course I spoke of Olga.

"Poor Olga," sighed Ivan; "she is a good girl, a loving girl, a fine girl; but a fool!"

"Olga a fool!" I exclaimed rather warmly, although I was speaking to her brother. "I never thought that of her."

"Ay; but she is for all that," said Ivan.

"Why, she would lay down her life for Alexander II."

"Well, and so would any good Russian, I should suppose," I said.

"No—no good Russian would," replied Ivan sharply.

Up to this moment he had been pretty calm; but when we had finished our breakfast and lighted our cigars, and the monitory bell had tolled the note of one, he became uneasy, restless, abstracted, and excited alternately; answered my questions in a hurried and off-handed way, seemed to be waiting or listening for something. Suddenly there was a dull boom as of a distant gun. Ivan sprang up, with a strange fierce light in his eyes. "Where are you going to sleep to-night?" he asked suddenly; and then, as if he had said something he had not intended, added: "I mean, hadn't you better sleep at our house to-night?"

"What do you mean, Ivan?" I asked in astonishment. "Of course, I shall sleep at the Colonel's; I have my duties to perform."

He smiled a smile I shall never forget—a smile in which pity, irony, contempt, and satisfaction were all blended, and said: "Yes, if you find a room to sleep in."

At that moment the new servant edged in. Ivan noticed the movement, threw down a piece of gold, and, without a word of farewell to me, hurried off.

I arose, wondering, and full of all sorts of strange fears and doubts, took my way toward the Nevski Prospect. Long before I arrived there I became aware that something unusual had happened; people were hurrying in the same direction as myself; a regiment of infantry passed me at the double, mounted orderlies were galloping hither and thither; and when I reached the Prospect I saw a large crowd, kept in by a cordon of soldiers, in front of the Colonel's house.

In reply to my question, a bystander said: "There has been a serious explosion at the house of the Chief of Police."

"Anyone hurt?" I asked eagerly.

"No," replied the man. "The chief was at a meeting elsewhere."

I edged my way to the line of military and told the officer in charge that I belonged to the household. He allowed me to pass; and I then saw what a narrow escape my patron had had, for over entire side of the house was in tottering ruins.

The Colonel himself was in company with a number of officers, standing amid the shattered remains of his dining-room. When he saw me, he came forward, seized me by the hand, and said to the officers, in French: "Gentlemen, we may say that we owe our lives to this Englishman here, for, assuredly, had he not warned me in time, not one of us would have escaped."

At that moment a soldier approached and whispered in the Colonel's ear. The Colonel looked strangely at me, I thought, and replied to the man. The latter went away, and presently reappeared, bringing with him the water at the Warsaw restaurant whom Ivan had questioned. A long con-

versation in Russian took place between us. It was low, I don't think I should have been in them I could not understand it, but I presume you or your father or the ambassador would have heard that I, an amateur, was confined."

The Colonel was evidently very much agitated, though he was Chief of Police. "Ah, Richard," exclaimed Olga—this was the first time she had called me by my Christian name—"you don't know what it is."

"The Colonel, as cold-blooded and unfeeling a capital as there is in Europe, should be a prisoner."

"The Colonel received me of course with the most profuse apologies. He urged us as sole excuse the fact that circumstances were so entirely against me and whispered confidentially: "Not that I believe you would have been kept prisoner for long."

He expressed his utmost surprise that what was to be done, added to the fact that this spy writer had seen me in the company of one of the most notorious freebooters, were sufficient proofs of complicity, that I was supposed to have entered the service of the Colonel on purpose to give information to the plotters of all police moves.

And so I settled down to my usual life. Olga and I were constantly together, and before long it was no secret that we were betrothed. Oh Ivan I heard and saw nothing and his parents knew not even whether he was in Russia or not.

A year passed during which time my relatives died, and I found myself comfortably off, if not rich. I went to England for the funeral and to attend the winding up of his affairs; but my heart was in Russia, and I determined to return thither as soon as I could. This was in 1881, the year of the assassination of Alexander II, when the bloodhounds of the Government were loose upon all suspected persons with a keenness and ferocity hitherto unexampled.

I started from my bed, dressed myself, and knocked at the Colonel's door. He appeared armed with a revolver, but laughed heartily when he saw me. "Why, Mr. Cornell," he said in French. "what is it?"

"Colonel," I said, "there is to be a meeting of police officers here to-morrow, is there not?"

The Colonel looked astonished. "Why, he exclaimed, "how did you know that? Not a soul out of the police bureau knows it."

The Colonel apparently was perplexed. But for my warning he and the chief police officers of the capital might have been destroyed. Still, I was evidently in league with that political body in whose hands he is to plant a tool. I think your influence over him is sufficient to alter him for the better."

This was all she said; but the sorrowful earnestness with which she spoke went to my heart.

I went to the Colonel's directly. After our first greetings, I said to him: "Colonel, I hear very bad news of young Dolomski." The old soldier shook his head confirming.

I continued: "I want you to do me an extraordinary favor—"

"It is to release him, it is impossible," interrupted the Colonel.

"But remember," I went on, "if he had not told me about that attempt on your house, I could not have warned you. If he had not thus been given time to go elsewhere, nothing could have saved you and the other officers."

"That is true," said the officer, "but it was not out of affection for me that he did it, remember."